

Budget negotiations are ongoing. The Republicans demanded \$73 billion in cuts and Democratic negotiators agreed to \$73 billion in cuts. Now the Republicans and Tea Party are saying they want additional cuts, as well as restrictions on abortion and environmental protection. They keep moving the goal farther and farther to the right.

If no agreement can be reached between Congressional Republicans, the President and the Senate leadership, the federal government will experience a “shutdown.”

Below is some important information on how a shutdown might affect you and your family.

During the shutdown, Congressman Israel’s Long Island and Washington, DC offices will be closed and most staff will be furloughed. A member of the staff will be available for emergency casework situations. **If you believe you have an emergency situation related to a federal agency please send a message to Congressman Israel’s email hotline at [NY02Hotline@mail.house.gov](mailto:NY02Hotline@mail.house.gov) with your name, phone number, address, and a description of the situation.** You can also call the hotline and leave a message at 202-226-4229.

Below are questions and answers related to a government shutdown.

### **What is a federal government shutdown?**

Most federal agencies and programs are funded through annual appropriations acts, which must be passed by Congress and signed by the President. If interim or full-year funding measures are not enacted into law, the time interval when agency appropriations are not enacted is referred to as a “funding gap.” When a funding gap occurs, the federal government begins a “shutdown” of the affected activities, including the furlough of non-emergency personnel and curtailment of agency activities and services.

### **What services and agencies would be affected?**

During a shutdown, the federal government is limited to services that involve the safety of human life or the protection of property. An estimated 800,000 federal workers would be furloughed. More than 126,000 civilian federal employees work in New York. Essential services, such as the military, border protection, police and homeland security, would continue.

### How could a shutdown affect me or my family?

During a shutdown, many government services will be delayed and facilities closed. You can expect the following:

- **Active Duty Military**—While most service members and military personnel would remain on duty through a shutdown, their paychecks could be delayed. Congressman Israel voted for an amendment on Thursday, April 7 that would have ensured pay for the troops, but it did not pass.

- **IRS**—Tax forms still need to be postmarked by Monday, April 18. Electronic tax returns should be processed, but paper returns will not be, leading to a delay in getting your refund.

- **Social Security**—Benefits for this crucial program do not go through the appropriations process, so they should continue being deposited in your account or mailed to your home. However, staff cuts may delay other services such as enrolling new participants, holding hearings, or resolving problems.

- **Medicare**—Benefits for this program are also exempt from the shutdown, so current participants should not notice any disruption, but new applications could be delayed.

- **Veterans**—Veterans Health Administration (VHA) hospitals like the Northport Veterans' Affairs Medical Center will stay open. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) disability compensation will be paid. Thanks to advance appropriations (a two-year budget cycle), the VA will continue to provide 100 percent of health care services to enrolled Veterans through VA medical facilities. Congressman Israel proudly voted for the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009 and President Obama signed that bill into law to enable the Department of Veterans Affairs to have its health care budget a full year in advance. This is why veterans' medical appointments will not be canceled or delayed in the event of a partial government-wide shut down.

- **Visas and Passports**—Prior shutdowns have kept new visa and passport applications from being processed. Embassies will remain open for services for American citizens, but will not conduct visa interviews.

- **National Parks**—National Park Service grounds, museums, and monuments will close, disrupting educational visits and vacation plans. National parks in New York include: the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Sagamore Hill National Historic

Site in Oyster Bay, and Fire Island National Seashore in Patchogue.

- **Unemployment**—If the shutdown continued for an extended period, the federal funds that help states pay the costs of their unemployment programs could run out, which would require the state to step in and advance the money to keep their programs running. Otherwise, benefits would be reduced or stopped.

- **FHA Loans** – The Federal Housing Administration will not endorse any single family loans and FHA staff will not be available to underwrite and approve new loans. The FHA guarantees more than one-third of all loans backing home purchases

- **Federal Courts**—Federal courts are not affected by the shutdown and remain open.

- **Disaster Response**—Disaster Response is not affected by the shutdown.

### Where does Congressman Israel stand on the budget?

Congressman Israel believes that we need to compromise to reduce debt and deficits in a responsible way that protects middle class and working families. That is why he supported a tough compromise of \$73 billion in cuts this budget year.

He also believes we need better budget priorities. Rather than privatizing Medicare, slashing benefits for seniors and low-income families, and cutting off student aid, Congressman Israel led an effort to reduce spending by ending taxpayer-funded subsidies for the most profitable oil companies in America. The Republicans defeated this effort. Congressman Israel also helped offer an amendment to terminate wasteful spending on the "Bridge to Nowhere" in Alaska. That, too, was defeated.

### Resources

[Links to Federal Agency Contingency Plans](#)

[CRS Report on Government Shutdown](#)

[Federal Government Operating Status](#)

Congressman Israel's Office Emergency Email Hotline: [NY02Hotline@mail.house.gov](mailto:NY02Hotline@mail.house.gov)

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